THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • OCTOBER 21, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

FEMALE CHEETAH TO SOON GIVE BIRTH TO CUBS AT KUNO NATIONAL PARK

Veera, one of the South African cheetahs at the park, is pregnant and is expected to deliver soon, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said

BOOST FOR PROJECT CHEETAH, SAYS MP CM

"Happiness is coming to Kuno... A female cheetah is soon going to give birth to cubs at the KNP. This news is a symbol of the great achievement of the Cheetah Project. The project started under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi is proving to be continuously improving the ecological balance," Yadav wrote in a post on social media platform X while sharing the information

LOWEST SURVIVAL RATE AMONG FELINES

- In September 2022, the prime minister released five female and three male cheetahs brought from Namibia into the Kuno National Park
- In February 2023, 12 more cheetahs were translocated from South Africa
- According to wildlife literature, among all feline family cubs, cheetah cubs have the lowest survival rate with only 5% reaching adulthood | P8

17

NUMBER OF CUBS BORN IN THE KUNO PARK IN THE PAST TWO YEARS; 12 HAVE SURVIVED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Brinkmanship as Uddhav's Sena, Cong bicker on 15

Both refuse to yield; Grand Old Party looks to contest from more if push comes to shove

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

WHILE the BJP announced its first list of 99 candidates for the assembly elections on Sunday, politics of brinkmanship played out in the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi between the Congress and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, particularly over 15 seats in the Vidarbha region and elsewhere.

Since the Congress has a better strike rate in Vidarbha, it does not want to yield. But Uddhav is equally stubborn and the dispute has reached Delhi.

After the Congress' refusal, Uddhav called a meeting of his senior party leaders to weigh his options and decide on the next steps. Earlier in the day, his son Aditya and Anil Parab met former Union minister Sharad Pawar to find a middle ground to resolve the situation.

A meeting of the Congress election and screening committee, scheduled in Delhi on Sunday, got cancelled due to the stalemate. But for the impasse, the party was expected to announce its first list of candidates after the meeting.

A senior Congress leader from the state, who is in Delhi for the meeting, said they were advised not to return as the next meeting could take place as early as Monday.

"The party leadership told us that the Congress should prepare to contest 150 to 160 seats as a contingency plan if push comes to shove. We were ready for 110-120 seats; now we have to expand our horizon and look for potential candidates. We have started tapping Congress aspirants from other constituencies to get a sense of their winning potential," the leader said, requesting anonymity.

Another Congress leader claimed that the Uddhav Sena neither has presence in these 15 seats nor does it have candidates, yet it is adamant about them. "If the Uddhav Sena eventually contests from these seats, all of them would easily fall into the ruling Mahayuti's pocket. The Sena (UBT) should understand the gravity of the situation and back off," he said.

However, a Sena (UBT) leader accused the Congress of being a habitual offender in not giving space to its allies.

"It should learn lessons from the Haryana debacle. We are expecting this issue would be resolved soon in the larger interest of the state," he said.

Uddhav has also asked the Congress not to stretch things beyond the breaking point. P7

RJD may go it alone in Jharkhand

With the rift in the ruling INDIA bloc widening over seat sharing, the RJD said it may go solo in the assembly polls in Jharkhand. The party wants to contest 18-20 seats but has been offered just 4-5 | P7

MUDA: ED TAKES AWAY 800 PAGES OF PAPERS, HARD DISK

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

DIRECTORATE of Enforcement (ED) officials, probing the MUDA site allotment scam, involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM, concluded their two-day raid and took away 800 pages of documents and a hard disk from the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The officers carried out searches till 2.30 am on Sunday and sought documents related to sites allotted under the 50:50 ratio. MUDA Commissioner AN Raghunandhan and other officers furnished all the correspondence related to 3 acres 18 guntas of land in Kesare owned by Parvathi and 24 sites allotted to her by MUDA in the upmarket Vijayanagar. The ED officials took both soft and hard copies and got them photocopied. The seized documents were packed

and moved under police security.

During the 41-hour raid, the ED officials camped in the MUDA office with round-the-clock protection from around 20 armed CRPF personnel along with local police.

Raghunandan told reporters that MUDA officials completely cooperated with ED officialsduring the investigation. "MUDA will resume its normal operations from Monday," he said.

The Lokayuktha police, meanwhile, who are also probing the MUDA site scam, interrogated former deputy commissioner and Raichur MP Kumar Naik, who had served in Mysuru and denotified the land in Kesare.

The Lokayuktha police posed a series of questions to him on approving the conversion of agricultural land on Survey Number 464 in Kesare. They also sought details of the spot visit and asked Naik whether he had gone through the records submitted by Accused No. 4 Devaraj and also on the missing signature of the witness.

Mysterious blast outside CRPF school in Delhi, multi-agency investigation on

UJWAL JALALI @ New Delhi

A mysterious blast occurred near a CRPF school in Delhi's Rohini area on Sunday morning, sparking a security alert in the national capital. The blast, which appeared to be triggered by a crude bomb, partially damaged the school's wall and some cars parked nearby. Nobody was injured.

Delhi Police personnel reached the spot soon after the explosion. The National Security Guard and National Investigation Agency also sent their teams to inspect the blast site.

Investigators lifted fragments of some white powder from the spot, which indicated the use of a crude bomb having chemical mixture of ammonium nitrate and ammonium chloride.

"As of now, we don't think any improvised explosive device was used as no metal-like substances, shrapnel, or ball bearings were found at the site," a senior official told this newspaper.

DCP (Rohini) Amit Goel said the police was alerted about the blast at 7.50 am. He said the police personnel who rushed to the spot reported foul smell emanating from the area. "The glasses of a nearby shop and some cars parked nearby were shattered. However, no one was injured," the DCP said.

National Security Guard personnel inspect the blast site outside the CRPF school at Prashant Vihar in Rohini area of New Delhi on Sunday morning | PARVEEN NEGI

A video of the incident, possibly recorded by some locals, showed thick plumes of smoke billowing from the blast site.

"A multi-agency probe is on. I am keeping a constant watch on the progress of the investigation and assure that the guilty will be brought to book. I appeal to all to maintain restrain and not indulge in fear mongering," Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena said.

Official sources said there was no intelligence input about any possible disruption.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi blamed the Centre for the blast. "The bomb blast exposes the deteriorating security situation in Delhi. The BJP-led Central government is responsible for law and order in the city. However, they spend their time obstructing the efforts of the elected Delhi government rather than fulfilling their responsibilities. This neglect has resulted in Delhi resembling the 1990s Mumbai underworld era, with shootings, extortion, and rising criminal confidence," she said.

TERROR STRIKE

Doc, 6 migrant workers shot dead in J&K's Ganderbal dist

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

IN a major terror attack, militants on Sunday evening shot dead a local doctor, identified as Dr Shahnawaz, and six migrant labourers working with a key infrastructure project at Gagangir of Sonmarg in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. Seven others were injured in the terror attack.

Sources said the terrorists fired indiscriminately from close range at a group of workers at Gagangir area of Sonamarg. "They also fired on a vehicle carrying migrant workers," sources said.

The workers were part of a construction team working on key Z Morh tunnel, which connects Gaganeer to Sonamarg in Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

Of the six workers who were killed, three were from Bihar, one from Madhya Pradesh, and one hailed from Jammu. One is yet to be identified.

Confirming the militant attack, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah wrote on X: "Very sad news of a dastardly & cowardly attack on non-local labourers. These people were working on a key infrastructure project... I strongly condemn this attack".

Home Minister Amit Shah termed the attack on civilians a despicable act of cowardice. "Those involved in this heinous act won't be spared and will face the harshest response from our security forces," he wrote on X.

After the attack, a joint contingent of police, CRPF, and Army launched a combing operation to trace the militants.

This is the second targeted attack on migrant workers after the Omar Abdullah government assumed charge in the UT. On Thursday, a Bihar native was shot dead in Shopian district.

Stones on track trigger loud noise near Mangaluru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

STONES placed on railway tracks by some miscreants near Thokkottu overbridge triggered a loud sound and caused vibrations in surrounding areas after trains passed over the stones on Saturday night.

Local residents informed Ullal and railway police about the incident after two trains between Kerala and Mangaluru passed over the track.

Railway department sources said the incident occurred around 9 pm. After complaints from the local residents, the Railway Police conducted night patrolling and found crushed stones on the track.

"We suspect that some children would have placed the stones while playing near the track. But the Railways has taken the incident seriously and we are investigating it from all angles. We will carry out arrests if any miscreants did it intentionally," an official said.

Local residents said that stones had been placed on both the tracks and a few women had seen two strangers walking beside the track an hour before the incident, which is being verified by the authorities.

A policeman stands near the spot where stones were found on the railway track

SEER SAMMAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Kanchi Shankaracharya Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal at an event to inaugurate the RJ Sankara Eye Hospital, in Varanasi on Sunday. Run by the Kanchi Math, the hospital aims to cater to the needs of people in 20 districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh as well as those in the border areas of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh | PTI | P8

KSMSCL MD seeks report after *TNIE* exposes med supplies mismanagement

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

A day after *The New Indian Express* published a report, 'KSMSCL officials diverted medical supplies elsewhere?', Karnataka State Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd Managing Director Srinivas on Sunday sought a report from officials concerned.

In a press statement, the health department and KSMSCL MD stated, "The issue raised is of serious concern, and a thorough investigation will be conducted to ensure the integrity and proper functioning of warehouse operations. The steps will be taken in response to the complaint, including the investigation process and the measures that will be implemented should the complaint be substantiated with stock position review, interviews and inspection and data collection."

EXPRESS IMPACT

The KSMSCL MD has sought a comprehensive review of the current stock position at the Mysuru warehouse. Inventory records will be audited and compared with physical stocks to identify any discrepancies. The warehouse will be inspected to verify whether storage and stock management procedures were followed, it stated.

The MD said the data on stock transactions, shipments and receipt logs will be obtained from the warehouse management system. A timeline of stock movements and any reported issues will be created for analysis.

The MD stated that if any irregularities are identified during the initial stock position review, corrective actions will be taken immediately. Inventory management processes will be temporarily enhanced with increased supervision until the investigation is concluded. Strict disciplinary action will be taken against those responsible, he added.

90 and counting as 25 more Indian flights get hoax bomb threats

SHEKHAR SINGH @ New Delhi

HOAX bomb threats continued to disrupt the aviation sector for the seventh consecutive day on Sunday, grounding planes and unnerving passengers.

As many as 25 flights across major carriers—IndiGo, Vistara, Air India and Akasa Air—were forced into emergency security measures after receiving hoax threats. Since October 14, over 90 Indian flights have been affected by similar bomb scares.

Though these threats turned out to be fake, the fallout is real: delayed flights, disrupted schedules, and mounting anxiety among passengers and airlines.

"We received security threats on six of our flights," a Vistara spokesperson said, listing major international routes — Delhi to Frankfurt, Singapore to Mumbai, Bali to Delhi, Singapore to Delhi, Singapore to Pune, and Mumbai to Singapore.

Six of the affected IndiGo flights included those on the Delhi-Istanbul, Mumbai-Istanbul, Jeddah-Mumbai, Kozhikode-Dammam in Saudi Arabia, Pune-Jodhpur, and Goa-Ahmedabad sectors.

Akasa Air said six flights — Ahmedabad to Mumbai, Delhi to Goa, Mumbai to Bagdogra, Delhi to Hyderabad, Kochi to Mumbai and Lucknow to Mumbai — received security alerts. "The Akasa Air Emergency Response teams were in touch with security and regulatory authorities," said an airline spokesperson.

Sources said six Air India flights, too, faced a similar situation though its officials did not share the number. They, however, confirmed that some flights were subject to security threats received on social media. "Following the laid down protocols, relevant authorities were immediately alerted, and all security procedures strictly adhered to, as per guidance from the regulatory authorities and security agencies," said an official.

While the source of bomb threats has largely been confined to social media, their growing number and frequency are a cause of concern.

X handle blocked

On Sunday, a handle on social media platform X that had issued bomb threats to some flights was blocked

3 K'taka flights, B'gavi airport receive hoax threats

Two flights — one arriving at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport and one departing — received hoax threat calls on Sunday, said sources. While one of them was an Alliance Air flight from Vidyanagar to KIA, the second one was an IndiGo flight taking off from KIA to Delhi. A bomb threat was also received for a flight from Mangaluru to Dubai (IX 383). Belagavi's Sambra Airport, too, received a hoax bomb threat. P5

EXPRESS READ

Cyclone Dana may hit N Odisha-Bengal coast

Bhubaneswar: Cyclone Dana, the season's first tropical storm, is likely to form over Bay of Bengal by October 23. It may take shape of a severe category storm and move in the northwest direction towards north Odisha and West Bengal coasts, IMD said

Kiwis clinch historic Test win in India after 36 yrs

Bengaluru: New Zealand recorded their first Test victory on Indian soil after 36 years, beating the hosts by eight wickets on the fifth and final day of the opening encounter in Bengaluru. The Black Caps now lead the three-Test series 1-0. Needing 107 to win on the final day, New Zealand's Will Young (48 not out) and Rachin Ravindra (39 not out) added 75 runs for the third wicket to take the team to victory in 27.4 overs | PTI